The mission of Mott Community College is to provide high quality, accessible, and affordable educational opportunities and services that cultivate student success and individual development and improve the overall quality of life in a multicultural community.

The Foundation for Mott Community College is the fundraising operation which promotes higher education at MCC. The Foundation’s purpose is to assist students with scholarships, promote special projects at the college and enhance the quality of education and opportunity in this community. The Foundation:

- Provides for scholarships and grants to deserving students,
- Funds special projects involving economic development, education and training,
- Strengthens existing educational programs,
- Identifies and develops new career area programs,
- Promotes professional development for faculty and staff,
- Promotes educational, literary and scientific activities of MCC,
- Encourages greater community involvement, and
- Helps MCC to help itself.

Whatever you want to call it—it’s about pushing yourself to the limits...falling...and getting right back up again. It’s about stepping outside your comfort zone to build your dream. Only you can make it happen but Mott Community College is here to support our students by providing resources to help ease the burden—whether it is financial support, emergency assistance, child care, academic tutoring, professional development or emotional support—MCC gives students the confidence to keep going. It is through their perseverance that MCC students are able to make their dreams become a reality.

The stories you will read in this year’s annual report demonstrate the very real struggles some students encounter. With grace and tenacity, they have pushed through adversity in their life to achieve their goals—proving that if you want something bad enough, it CAN be done.

Stay strong and persevere.
I can feel the excitement in the air all around me! The positive energy and enthusiasm of students, faculty and staff with whom I meet and interact is infectious—the smiles, kind words and helpful gestures are the barometer I use to know we’re off to another great start at Mott Community College.

We were alerted this November that Mott Community College is once again nationally ranked as one of the top 150 colleges in the nation as we vie for the highly respected Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. We have remained in the top 15% since the ranking’s inception in 2013, which says a lot about Mott Community College. I believe it means that we’re doing something right: providing an environment that not only embraces a high-quality academic culture of learning opportunities, but also offers a wide range of supports and services that are equally beneficial to the campus and the broader community. I’m always inspired by the perseverance of students faced with a myriad of challenges that can prevent them from staying in school, completing their studies, and reaching their career goals—hindrances that can impede their success. For this reason, MCC has many safeguards and wraparound services already in place, or in the works—the Lenore Croudy Family Life Center tops that list (Grand Opening April 2020).

MCC is proud to offer a culture of student success. We venture beyond maintaining and exceeding the basic expectations for a higher education institution. MCC has made a priority to intentionally ensure our learning environment is inclusive, respectful, and welcoming for students, employees, and guests—everyone. Our Board of Trustees has designated our top Institutional Priority is to serve as the community college leader in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Once again, we are striving to be the community college model for others to follow.

As you see, Mott Community College remains committed to open access, affordability, and success for students. We remain committed to serve as an anchor institution for Flint and Genesee County’s success. Your gifts help to make these commitments a reality. I am deeply grateful that you continue to give so that educational experiences are excellent and goals and dreams are achieved.

MCC is fortunate to have great friends and staunch supporters like you. Keep doing what you’re doing – you are truly making a difference in the lives of our students!

Looking Forward,

BEVERLY WALKER-GRIFEA, PH.D.
President, Mott Community College
The theme chosen for The Foundation for Mott Community College 2019 Annual Report is perseverance. As you read the inspiring stories of alumni within these pages, you will notice how they have demonstrated perseverance to accomplish their academic, personal and professional goals. Their stories speak to how education and hard work can transform and enhance people’s lives. While perseverance is a trait carried by many individuals who reach their academic goals and achieve success in their chosen fields, a scholarship here, a grant there, a financial boost along the way carried them to the finish line.

At The Foundation for Mott Community College, we’re honored to shepherd an outstanding community of longtime supporters. Your extraordinary generosity continues to make a tremendous impact here at the college and in the community. Your gifts are the key to our students’ success and to the college maintaining this historic tradition of excellence.

Many of our students face enormous challenges in their lives – circumstances often beyond their control that can hinder their plans to stay in school or complete their studies altogether. We’re counting on you to continue partnering with us to ensure that students receive the assistance they need through scholarships and other financial supports.

When you give to The Foundation for MCC, you open doors of opportunity for our students. You pave the way to bright futures for our students. When these students graduate, equipped with the knowledge base, skills and credentials to help them succeed, they will have an excellent opportunity to enhance the workforce, to help build strong communities and, yes, to pay it forward.

We’re counting on your support to help our students, to help MCC achieve great things. Thank you, for all that you continue to do for Mott Community College, and The Foundation for Mott Community College. We are so very grateful to have you in our corner.

Sincerely,

CLAUDE HIGH
The Foundation for MCC Board Chair

LENNETTA B. CONEY
The Foundation for MCC President

THE MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY DEFINITION OF PERSEVERANCE:
A “CONTINUED EFFORT TO DO OR ACHIEVE SOMETHING DESPITE DIFFICULTIES, FAILURE, OR OPPOSITION: THE ACTION OR CONDITION OF AN INSTANCE OF PERSEVERING, TO PERSIST IN A STATE, ENTERPRISE, OR UNDERTAKING IN SPITE OF COUNTERINFLUENCES, OPPOSITION, OR DISCOURAGEMENT.”
To me perseverance is the culmination of one’s ability to meet their goals, whatever they may be, through purpose, hard work, use of knowledge base, communication, grit and integrity. Ultimately, it is getting something across the goal line. – Dave Lurvey

MCC Alum Emerges as a Driving Force in Community Building

One of the best signs of a growing and thriving community is plenty of new construction projects. When it comes to building, DW Lurvey Construction is a popular sign spotted among construction sites across Genesee County. But for Dave Lurvey, President & CEO of DW Lurvey, construction isn’t just about building big buildings all over town. It’s an optimal opportunity to contribute to the overall growth and development of the community, and to give back.

Dave Lurvey attended Mott Community College from 1991 through 1992. It was a choice “made out of necessity,” he reflects. Gravitating toward engineering and construction from his earliest years of building tree houses and DIY projects at home with his father, his focus in high school was predictably in the STEM programs. But he didn’t apply himself to school and achieved mediocre grades in difficult classes. “Upon high school graduation my parents indicated that they would support me in anything I chose; however, I needed to prove my dedication prior to completing my formal education,” he says. After MCC, he moved on to Lawrence Technological University, earning a Bachelor of Architecture in 1996. “MCC was the obvious local choice as a proving ground because it offered a campus setting, great local support, and an affordable education,” he continues. “I took complete advantage of that opportunity and it was a perfect transition to the university.”

Considered among the larger construction firms in mid-Michigan, DW Lurvey primarily handles commercial, industrial, healthcare and mixed use projects. The company specialty is turn key design and construction—handling projects from concept to completion seamlessly. “Our company maintains a local focus, utilizing local employees and a local contractor base,” says Lurvey. “We have developed a team of stakeholders, so to speak, who feel that we are accomplishing much more than building projects; we are helping to rebuild the Flint community. There is so much more to projects than simply bricks and mortar.”

MCC’s new Culinary Arts Institute in downtown Flint, and the Lenore Croudy Family Life Center, (now under construction with a targeted completion date of April 2020), are among the projects DW Lurvey has worked on for the College. The Center will house MCC’s Early Childhood Education program and a variety of support services for MCC students. In addition to Blackstone’s restaurant in downtown Flint, which celebrated a 10-year anniversary in the Spring of 2019, the Lurveys also own the Market Tap, located at the Flint Farmers Market, among other ventures.

Having achieved major success with his company, Lurvey believes strongly in giving back to the community and his alma mater. “The Early Childhood Education and Family Life Center are aligned with our goals and concerns,” he states. “Our most recent donation is reflective of those same values.”

Partnering with numerous local foundations and non-profits on initiatives that help underserved populations is one of Lurvey’s numerous endeavors. He is also committed to implementing programs which offer low income individuals good paying construction jobs as well as enhancing diversity on his construction sites.

“We are excited about this new opportunity and look forward to its implementation on our job sites,” he says. “Our leadership team is comprised of many who studied at MCC through technical or business studies. Once this project is refined, we hope to partner with MCC to see if we can elevate the initiative as a team.”
Life happens.

Perhaps no one knows that better than Michael Davis-Thomas. Growing up in Michigan’s foster care system and “aging out”—he has seen it all.

At the age of 22, Davis-Thomas is among young adults who “aged out” of the foster care system, (typically around age 18), without parents, relatives or guardians to help them become self-sufficient. They become responsible for taking care of themselves and unfortunately, that often creates a homelessness issue.

He knows a thing or two about being homeless. Recently, he dodged what he believed would become another season of homelessness, just in the nick of time—temperatures had started dropping into the 30s already. He is consistently working at finding stable and affordable housing. He’s a “couch surfer.” (Couch surf: to stay overnight with a series of hosts who typically provide accommodations {such as a couch to sleep on} at no cost).

A national report issued in 2018 indicated that Michigan lags behind the rest of the country in helping young people move out of the foster care system and into a successful adult life. The Annie E. Casey Foundation Report (“Fostering Youth Transitions: Using Data to Drive Policy and Practice Decisions,” November 13, 2018) found that Michigan ranked last in the nation in getting young people who age out of the foster care system connected to educational and vocational opportunities.

That does not sit well with Michael Davis-Thomas. He’s already determined that resolving this issue, as an advocate/activist, will be his life’s work.

He had been attending Delta College and Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) for three years. But, an unfortunate turn of events prompted him to leave school. Shortly after, he became homeless. Michael credits MCC President Dr. Beverly Walker Griffea with encouraging him to return to school. He was staying at a local homeless shelter when she paid a visit. “I didn’t know how she could help, but I gave her my resume and cover letter, and mentioned that I needed help getting back into school and obtaining a job.” It was from that moment, MCC embraced Davis-Thomas, helping him get into MCC the following winter semester and obtain a work study position.

“There are a lot of caring people here at MCC who wrapped their arms around me,” he says. “People have really invested in me here. This journey has not been easy. I went through a whole semester being homeless, then having a place, then becoming homeless again and people at MCC said, “What can we do to help?”

Davis-Thomas wants to help people whose circumstances and life stories mirror his own. He also wants to share his knowledge about available resources, services, policies, and laws to prevent others from falling into the cracks.

“Years ago, there was a caring, community atmosphere; we had a village mentality where we helped and guided one another for generations and so on,” he reminisces. “I’d like to bring this back to our community, to our country.”

Michael Davis-Thomas is a double major in Political Science and Public Administration with a minor in Law & Society. He is working to complete the credits needed to transfer from MCC (he has two more semesters to go). He hopes to attend the University of Michigan-Flint or UM-Ann Arbor to work on obtaining two doctoral degrees in his major and a master’s degree in his minor. In addition to his studies, he’s active in student organizations, including the Mott Care Club and the Black Student Union and is busy holding down several jobs—including working as the Mott Bear Mascot, a work study position with MCC Workforce Development, a public speaker/advocate/activist with the State of Michigan Child Welfare System and Michigan Youth Opportunity Initiative, a federal Reviewer for the National Youth and Transition Database among others.

He has lofty career goals. “I want to run for Congress two to three years from now and work my way up,” he says. “I want to build a second chance foundation to the Presidency of the United States.”

“PERSEVERANCE: A MINDSET TO BE RESILIENT AND SURVIVE AT ALL COSTS.”

- Michael Davis Thomas
MCC ALUM SUMMER AWAD SOARS IN THE DAY SPA BUSINESS

Summer Awad made owning and operating her own 22,000-square-foot, full-service salon and day spa both a personal and professional goal several years ago.

By getting a good start in her education at MCC, continuously advancing her business skills, as well as a combination of hard work, networking and engaging with other like-minded individuals, she reached her goals. Now, she’s living the dream.

Day spas are becoming increasingly popular in the U.S. The International Spa Association reports the amount of spa visits, locations and revenues has been escalating in the past few years. Flint and Genesee County are closely following that trend as people continue to seek places where they can get facials, manicures, massages and more—all in one stop.

Awad’s Summerset Salon has captured that spa-going audience in the area. With the motto “Experience the fine art of pampering” blazing across its official website, Summerset Salon Day Spa of Flint Township provides clients with a unique environment that makes them feel like a “King or Queen for the day.”

Having been voted “the BEST and FAVORITE Salon and Spa in Genesee County” by Genesee County residents in 2011, Summer Awad and staff know how to keep their customers coming back for more. In addition to full hair, manicure and pedicure services, Summerset offers facials, full-body massage, and much more.

“At MCC, we’re always encouraging students to take full advantage of everything we have to offer at the college—academic and peer tutoring for courses, athletic and recreational programs, mentoring initiatives, a broad range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, financial supports—and the list goes on,” states FMCC President Lennetta Coney. "Summer is among many former students who have become highly successful business owners—they represent MCC well and we’re extremely proud of them.”

Coney adds, “We have alumni who work in every imaginable field—architecture and construction, business, healthcare, finances, and everything in between. Their achievements can only encourage our current students to work hard and dream big.”
Writing Her Own Future

Perseverance, to me, is the choice to push through everyday criticism, hardship, frustration and pain in order to accomplish your goals and achieve your full potential. It’s not as much about endurance as it is about taking each trial and making it a part of the journey. To endure is to put up with it all. To persevere is to move through it and then past it! – Jodi Denton

MCC ALUM BREAKS WITH FAMILY TRADITION, EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

Getting a college degree wasn’t always on Jodi Denton’s radar.

A first-generation, non-traditional student, she was never encouraged to go to college after high school. “My father always told me I only had one purpose and that was to make babies,” Denton says. “He did not think women had what it took for higher education. I heard that I was inadequate most of my childhood and so shaking that frame of mind was hard.”

“My mother was a single mom raising my brother and me on a waitress’s salary,” she adds. “It was understood among my family that you either had to have a lot of money or be super smart to go to college. So, in my mind, it was out of the question.”

Instead, she got married and had “two amazing boys” – still one of her greatest achievements and she’s grateful to have had an opportunity to stay home with them. Little did she know, a college degree was indeed part of her future.

Her husband, Ross, convinced her to try college after he returned to school, first attending SVSU, then Mott. “My husband realized how important having a degree really is and went back to college,” she says. “Mott was affordable and close to home. After he graduated from Mott and moved on to another school for his bachelor’s degree, he started to encourage me to go to college.”

After enrolling at Mott, Jodi Denton managed to earn a 4.0 GPA her first semester at Mott. She was ecstatic, she says, reflecting on her achievement and realizing that nothing could stop her from chasing her dreams.

“I have always wanted to be an author,” she says. “I absolutely love to read and write.”

Throughout my time at Mott I was encouraged, challenged and supported. I have at least four professors with whom I am still in contact.”

She graduated in 2018 from Mott with an Associate in Arts (High Honors) and an Associate in General Studies (High Honors), majoring in Creative Writing and English.

She now works at an insurance auditing company where her responsibilities include drafting descriptions of businesses’ operations to make sure they are appropriate for insurance coverage. “The education I received at Mott has helped me with many aspects of my job but especially writing clear and concise descriptions,” she adds.

However, she’s on her way to fulfilling that dream of becoming a full-time writer. She’s in the process of writing one novel and finishing another, and learning how to self-publish her own books. Writing is a “real passion” and she now has the confidence to pursue the career of her dreams. She hopes to have her first book published by the end of the year.

“I am so thankful for the education, relationships and confidence I gained while attending Mott,” she says. “My expectations were exceeded and I am proud of the person I’ve become.”

“I’m so excited for the journey ahead, and so thankful for the role that Mott Community College played in my personal journey.”

JODI DENTON
Serving as Chair of The Foundation for Mott Community College Board of Directors, these extraordinary leaders set an exemplary standard for future leaders to follow, dedicating their resources, time and talents to secure a strong future for Mott Community College. These remarkable individuals remain supportive of our present efforts, and share a sincere commitment to the success of Mott Community College. Following is a list of the past Foundation Board of Directors Chairs and their achievements.

RUTH RAWLINGS MOTT: Helped launch The Foundation for MCC serving as the first Chair. The Honorable Paul Gadola served as the first Vice Chair. In 1986, The Foundation was created as the charitable arm of the college.

DAVID S. MCCREDIE: Mr. David McCredie succeeded Ruth Mott as Chair and led the Board of Directors in establishing a repository for contributions while serving with individuals such as Nancy Kleinpell, Delores Ennis, Donald Mueller, The Honorable Thomas Yeotis, Harriet Kenworthy, Dr. Ellen Howe, Ray J. Kelly Jr, Nicholas McKay and many others.

THE HONORABLE THOMAS C. YEOTIS: Serving as Chair of The Foundation for MCC from 1994-95, this retired Genesee County Circuit Court Judge is a proud MCC alumnus and an ardent supporter of the college. One of the founding members of the Mott Community College Alumni Association and the Bruin Club, which has provided more than $2 million in scholarships to student-athletes at Mott Community College, he also initiated the idea for the Mott Bear mascot.

DOUGLAS P. BACON: Appointed Chair in 1995, Doug Bacon spearheaded the FMCC's achieving its first $1 million fund raising goal. He was in office when the Women in Education initiative was launched and is known as having the longest tenure as Board Chair in the FMCC's history.

DR. RICHARD A. SHICK: Appointed Chair in 2005. During his tenure a bronze statue—the Bruin Bear—was unveiled in front of the Ballenger Field house and our $3 million goal was achieved. Dr. Shick and wife Rose Marie’s contribution to the Dental Lab was given during this timeframe and today the laboratory is named for them. Dr. Shick was also instrumental in assisting in the relocation of the Dental Lab from Mott Children’s Health Center to its present location.

JIMMY W. KING: Appointed chair in 2008, Jimmy King oversaw the one of the largest donations given to the Foundation—a $1 million planned gift. In November 2010, a funding milestone of $5.3 million was achieved.

JOSEPH H. BLACK: Joe Black ushered in the observance of MCC's 90th anniversary and pioneered support toward the creation of the Lapeer Learner Fund which enjoyed several growth years as a result of the Lapeer Golf Outing. During Chairperson Black’s tenure, the Foundation also received a $300,000 gift from Dr. William R. Pickard to fund Closing the Achievement Gap initiative.

CLAUDE HIGH (Current Chair): Under Chair Claude High’s tenure, the FMCC welcomed a $2.1 million gift from the Dewaine V. and Jana B. Robinson Trust, the second perpetual trust for the college. (The first perpetual gift to MCC was from the William S. Ballenger Trust in 1951). He was appointed Chair in 2017.

TERESA McCLELLAND-SARGENT (Chair Elect): Soon to be the second female Chair of The Foundation, Teresa McClelland-Sargent has been an ardent supporter, giving of her time, talent and resources by serving as co-chair on the Women in Education Program, underwriting the bi-annual, “If These Shoes Could Talk” luncheon and guiding the investment strategy of the organization on the finance committee.
Thank you to our generous donors who have helped shape Mott Community College into the STRONG institution it is today.

Many thanks to the individuals who supported Mott Community College and The Foundation for Mott from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019.

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If you know MCC alumni who deserve recognition, please nominate them for the Distinguished Alumni Award.

Mott Community College’s Distinguished Alumni Awards was established in 2002 for the purpose of recognizing truly outstanding women and men who have provided an inspirational impact to students and/or the community and for their significant contributions to career achievement and community service. By honoring our former students we hope to inspire today’s student to strive for both personal and professional success.

**MCC Distinguished Alumni Nomination Criteria**

Nominees should be individuals who have attended Flint Junior College, Flint Junior Community College, Genesee Community College, and/or Mott Community College. Distinguished Alumni nominees are judged on the following criteria:

- **Role Model** – Inspiring excellence in others.
- **Outstanding Success** – Significant career or personal achievement.
- **Impact** – Accomplishments which have changed the community for the better.
- **Community Service** – Demonstration of visible commitment to the community.

Selection of MCC’s 2020 honorees will be made by a committee representing the greater Flint community. For a nomination form, call (810) 762-0425. Forms are also available online at: https://www.mcc.edu/alumni/alumni_award.shtml.

**NOMINATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE FOUNDATION FOR MCC BY MAY 1, 2020.**

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